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SUBJECT: CZECH CONTRIBUTIONS TO IRAQ

REF: A. PRAGUE 1487

1B. PRAGUE 1466

1C. PRAGUE 1401

11. Summary. This is the first in a series of cables summarizing significant Czech contributions (military, security, democracy promotion, development assistance, and humanitarian aid) in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans. The Czech Republic has maintained troops in Iraq since 2003 and provided training for over 12,000 Iraqi police and security personnel. The Czechs have provided civic training to Iraqi NGOs, journalists, and government officials. They have donated \$9 million in reconstruction assistance, \$5 million on humanitarian assistance, \$2 million for cultural preservation projects. They have forgiven 80% of Iraqi sovereign external debt owed to the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic spent approximately \$93 million to benefit the people of Iraq through 2005. Although final 2006 figures are not yet available, Embassy contacts estimate the Czechs spent an additional \$13 million this year. End summary.

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Background  
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12. The Czech Republic's support for democracy and human rights is a core principle of Czech foreign policy, and an enduring legacy of the Czech Republic's forty-year struggle against communism. Since the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the Czech Republic has proven itself a reliable U.S. ally in these areas, as well as an important partner in NATO and GWOT, a like-minded ally in the United Nations, and a strong promoter within the EU of the transatlantic relationship.

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Military/Security Contributions  
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13. The Czech Republic is an original coalition member of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and was at one time the fourth largest contributor of troops to Iraq. Starting in September 2002, the Czechs were the primary contributor to a 400 member nuclear-biological-chemical (NBC) defense contingent. That mission was followed in 2003 by the six-month deployment of a 526-person Czech field hospital that treated more than 10,000 coalition forces and Iraqi citizens in the Basra area.

14. From December 2003 to December 2006, the Czech Army deployed approximately 100 military police in Basra to train Iraqi security forces. In December 2006, in coordination with the British, the Czech military police concluded this mission

and relocated to a base near the Basra airport to assume new duties, which will largely involve force protection. The Czech Commander of the 10th MP Contingent estimates that Czech forces in Basra have trained 12,000 Iraqi police and security forces since 2003.

¶ 15. In addition, the Czechs have participated in the Multinational Security Transition Command (MNSTC-I) and NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) to help create security structures in Iraq. They sent six military police trainers to the NATO facility at Ar Rustamiyah in Baghdad and contributed \$200,000 to the Trust Fund to support this mission. The Czechs also contributed nine police trainers to the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC) in Jordan, which also provides training for Iraqi police; they will not participate in JIPTC in 2007.

¶ 16. The Czech parliament recently extended the troop mandate for Iraq through 2007, maintaining the 100-man ceiling that has been in place for three years (refs A-B).

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Democracy Promotion  
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¶ 17. The Czechs have taught the best practices of their successful transition experience to members of Iraqi civil society. Examples include:

-- In 2003, the Czech government sent nineteen experts to CPA Baghdad to consult on transition issues, such as banking, trade and investment, engineering, water and energy policy, and infrastructure planning.

-- In 2004, the Czech government provided police equipment and training for diplomats, doctors, economists, and infrastructure specialists.

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-- In 2005, the Czech government helped Iraqi citizens living in the Czech Republic vote in the Iraqi elections by transporting them to Berlin.

-- In 2005-2006, with financial support from the Czech MFA, Czech NGO People in Need has provided training for Iraqi NGOs, journalists, and government officials at the Democracy and Transition Center in Jordan.

-- In 2004-2006, in cooperation with Prague-based Central European and Eurasian Law Institute (CEELI), the Czechs provided legal training for 200 Iraqi judges.

-- In 2006, the Czech government, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), provided training in Prague on immigration, border control, and airport security to 45 Iraqi interior ministry officials.

-- The Czechs have provided financial support for ten Iraqi students pursuing a Ph.D program in economics in Prague at the Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education (CERGE-EI).

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Reconstruction & Development  
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¶ 18. The Czechs also help reconstruction efforts in Iraq by donating funds, providing debt relief, and encouraging private foreign investment. Specifically, the Czechs have:

-- Spent \$9 million on Iraqi reconstruction.

-- Forgiven 80% of Iraqi sovereign external debt owed to the Czech Republic. According to the MFA, the first 60% (\$171 million) has already been forgiven, and the remaining 20%

(\$57 million) will be forgiven in 2008-2009 pursuant to the IMF program. (Note: the Czechs have resisted forgiving the remaining 20%, which was for military purchases, because they do not want to set a precedent. Ref C.)

-- Spent \$20.8 million between 2003-2005 to encourage private Czech companies to do business in Iraq (e.g., by providing feasibility studies). One notable success: a Czech engineering firm won a \$40 million tender in November 2006 to rebuild the Iraqi Midland Refineries.

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Humanitarian Assistance  
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¶9. The Czechs are committed to long-term humanitarian aid in Iraq, having spent over \$5 million on such efforts since 2003. The Czechs have operated a medevac program since 2003 that has brought 38 Iraqi children to Prague and provided life-saving cardiac surgery and convalescent care for them (and material support for their accompanying family members). In 2005, to supplement the efficacy of the medevac program, the Czechs founded a pediatric cardiac center at a hospital in Basra, and donated equipment and provided training to Iraqi doctors working there.

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Cultural Preservation  
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¶10. The Czechs have spent more than \$2 million on preserving Iraqi cultural heritage. In one notable example, the Czechs spent \$330,000 on the restoration of manuscripts in the National Library of Baghdad. They also contributed \$100,000 to restore the Kurdish Citadel in Urdil. Finally, the Czechs donated arms and ammunition to Iraqi security forces to guard national heritage sites.

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